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Homemakers' chat
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U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

TUESDAY, November 17, 1942

QUESTION-BOX
Gather fruit within year of planting?
Greens under glass?
Piecrust made with nuts?
How save the washing machine?

ANSWERS FROM
scientists of the U. S.
Department of Agriculture

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Now for the questions from the week's mailbag waiting here for answer--several questions about the home garden, more questions about food, and, last of all, one inquiry about the washing machine.

First, the garden questions: A housewife who lives just outside a large city writes: "In the city markets where I buy food most fruit has been shipped in from far-away States. These markets sell a little local fruit at berry season and sometimes more in late summer or fall, but most of the fruit I buy comes from a distance. I've been thinking that as the war continues with heavy demands on shipping, the markets won't be getting so much of this fruit, And I've been thinking that my family would be wise to grow some of our own fruit. Please tell me whether there is any fruit I can plant this fall and have bearing as soon as next year."

Garden advisors answer: Yes strawberries. You can put in strawberry plants this fall and pick berries from them next year. Other fruits do not bear so soon after planting. Strawberries have many advantages for the home gardener. They need very little care-- a big advantage in these busy times. Strawberry plants don't need spraying as most fruit trees do. You can grow strawberries in almost any part of the country and in many different soils. They are the first fruits to ripen in the spring. Many people like them better than any other fruit because of their fine flavor and color. And as far as the health of the family is concerned, strawberries have the big advantage of

being very rich in vitamin C. They stand right along with citrus fruits in this vitamin that everybody needs every day.

So if you live where the weather is still mild, you can put in your strawberry patch right now and count on having fresh berries next year. If you live too far north, plan to plant strawberries next spring.

Now for a question about growing your own fresh greens for winter meals. A home gardener says: "Is it possible to grow fresh greens for winter meals in cold frames?"

The answer is: It depends on where you live. If you live in the North where winters are severe, of course, you can't grow greens, even hardy greens, in cold frames in the depth of winter. But if you live where the temperature rarely falls below 15 degrees--if you live below the Mason-Dixon Line in the East, or in a mild climate like that of the Pacific Northwest-- then the hardier greens will thrive in cold frames all winter. In the State of Maryland, for example, it is a good, old-fashioned custom for every housewife to have parsley growing in her cold frame all winter. Probably the best greens to grow in cold frames are mustard and turnip. Greens like collards and kale are hardy enough, but they take up too much room. Still farther south you can grow greens outdoors all winter and won't have to bother about cold frames.

By the way, the more you can learn about growing your own vegetables during this wartime winter, the better off your family may be next year. A great many families must raise their own fresh food in the months to come, if they are to have meals that keep them in best health. So, whether you've ever gardened before in your life, gather your garden information now. And when you sit down to read this winter, read about gardening as much as you can.

Now from gardening, let's turn to cooking. A housewife who is thinking about pies for Thanksgiving writes:"I have heard of a delicious piecrust made with chopped nuts. Can you tell me how to make a nut crust and whether it would be good for pumpkin pie?"

Cookery experts of the U.S.Department of Agriculture give these directions for making pastry with nuts. They suggest using nuts like pecans or black walnuts that are rich in fat and they say to grind them fine. Useany good recipe for plain pastry. Then just substitute the finely ground nuts for half the fat the recipe calls for. (If the recipe calls for 6 tablespoons of fat, use 3 tablespoons of fat and 3 tablespoons of finely ground nuts.) Mix and bake just like plain pastry. Nut crust is very good with cream filling. You can sprinkle chopped nuts over the top of the meringue just before you serve the pie, if you want to. You could use nut crust for pumpkin pie, but the spice in the pumpkin mixture is likely to mask the nut flavor in the crust rather than bring it out.

Speaking of nuts, did you know that your boy in an army camp will be getting mixed nuts for Thanksgiving dinner? Mixed nuts are just one of the good food, on the Army's Thanksgiving dinner menu, planned to be as near like a good, old-fashioned home Thanksgiving dinner as possible.

Now for a lastquestion today, A housewife says:"Can you tell me how to look after my electric washer so it will keep in good condition 'for the duration' and, I hope, for many years beyond? I know how to do a good washing, but I want to know how to look after the washer itself."

The answer to this letter is a brand-new leaflet called "How to make your washing machine last longer." Send a postcard to the U.S.Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. and ask for a copy. It's free. You're welcome to it as long as the supply lasts.

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